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From: <tcoan1@ic3.ithaca.edu>
To: A16.A16(kidstv)
Date: 10/16/95 2:45am
Subject: violence and children's television

--Boundary (ID j+if8vnAw4hz/TgJE66ToA)
Content-id: <Pine.PMDF.3.91.951016024316.144074D@ic3.ithaca.edu>
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Received: from ic3.ithaca.edu by ic3.ithaca.edu (PMDF V5.0-4 #11318)
id <01HWHQ3D35US0031WW@ic3.ithaca.edu>; Mon, 16 Oct 1995 02:34:28 -0400 (EDT)
Date: Mon, 16 Oct 1995 02:34:28 -0400 (EDT)
From: tcoan1@ic3.ithaca.edu
Subject: rules for children television
To: kidstv@fcc.gov
Cc: massmedia@liber.edu
Message-id: <Pine.PMDF.3.91.951016012629.142448A-100000@ic3.ithaca.edu>
MIME-version: 1.0
Content-type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII
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Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
(MM Docket 93-48) kidstv@fcc.gov
Re: Rules for Children's Television

Oct 15, 1995

To whom it may concern,

The concern over the quality, as well as, the quantity of children's television programs has shown a significant increase in recent years. The overall decline of broadcast television standards - especially in explicit and gratuitous violence - forces parents and guardians to monitor what their children watch. A responsibility that parents in the past neglected to perform. Many adults finally realize that television is not a suitable baby-sitter to their children. Especially in the age of dwindling support for the commercial free public television who air quality programs such as the Children's Television Workshop. It is the role of the parent to take an active interest in the habits of their children, especially television viewing habits. Unaware of their responsibility, many parents blame networks and cable companies for damaging the impressionable minds of their son or daughter. Parents now are looking to the government in their fight against television violence. Unfortunately the Children's Television Act of 1994 accomplished little in proving broadcast programming.

Previous governmental attempts at regulating the quality of children's television have come up short of truly improving it. The addition to and stronger implementation of the Children's Television Act of 1994 in theory possesses numerous advantages and improvements. Though the application of many of the ideas seems difficult if not impossible. The first of the three principles devised to aid in carrying out the proposed changes exposes one of the difficulties. How are the feelings and reactions of the audience to be recorded?, processed? and then judged? How many complaints warrant a change in the program or programming schedule? The majority of working parents do not sit and watch television with their children. How are they to express their reactions? The restrictions regarding what airs on television undoubtedly will meet head on with anti-censorship groups and the public in general.

The second of the provisions calls for the defining of programming "specifically designed" to serve the education and informational needs of children. Besides the apparent ambiguity - who will act as gatekeeper as what meets the decided criteria. Networks paying other stations to fulfill their FCC requirements opens the networks

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to continue to play violent shows during the day.

Further government television regulation arises in the question of the V-Chip. Anti-censorsip groups view the chip as a possible step towards blanketing consorship. Even Bob Dole who strongly criticizes television oppses the V-Chip, recognizes its potential for constitutional infringement. Many parents see it as the answer to the problem of television violence.

The regulation of any aspect of a major American insitution creates conflict. Especailly in the case of television, where virually every American household is affected. To produce successful redults with minimal opposition, the process must move slow and steady. The quality of children's television programs remains an important issue, but it only will improve if the standards of the entire broadcast community increase.

--Boundary (ID j+if8vnAw4hz/TgJE66ToA)--

CC: FCCMAIL.SMTP("massmedia@liber.ithaca.edu")

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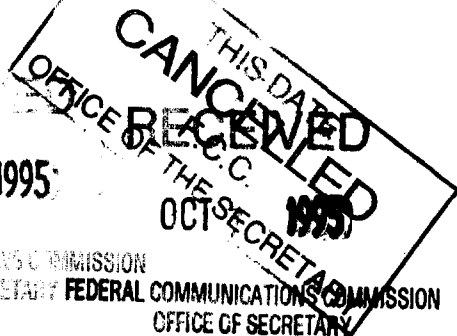
From: <cladouc1@ic3.ithaca.edu>
To: A16.A16(KIDSTV)
Date: 10/7/95 11:08am
Subject: RE TV VIOLENCE AND CHILDREN

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107 17 1995



Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Cara LaDouceur and I am a freshman at Ithaca College. Recently in my introduction to mass media class we have begun discussing the topic of television violence and its effect on children. In order to become more informed of the problems which exist, I have read various articles surrounding the topic. In response I have drawn my own conclusions and possible solutions to the ever-growing dilemma of television violence. In my opinion, the problem can not be solved through the application of just one answer, but instead must be a coordination of efforts.

To begin with, I feel that the media needs to reevaluate its programs, and consider the general public more often. Many times a program is shown because of the revenue it will draw, while the effects of its content are left in the shadows of a capitalistic based organization. An example of this is the topic of gangs. Although it is important to inform the public of gang activity, all to often it is done in a glamorizing light. "To refer to gang members by their street nicknames and identify them by the colors they fly is to bolster their egos and give them respect in the streets"(July 24, 1995, Boston Globe). In the eyes of a child, who may watch a made for television movie, based on gang life this type of portrayal may leave them believing that gangs lead an exciting life and that their actions are accepted by society. This is just one of the many violent groups displayed day after day on sitcoms, movies, and even cartoons.

Children often receive their initial exposure to society through television. If this dramatized perception appears real to them, and instills fear, or worse, anger, then something must change. A man by the name of Luntz found in a recent survey that 3/4 of children and 2/3 of adults feel that television promotes bad habits, or misinterpreted ideas of society. In response Luntz said, "This is something that Hollywood can't ignore. It's not [just] parents talking about their children. It's kids talking about themselves"(June 23, 1995, The Washington Times).

At this point, when television violence is a problem children can even detect then it is past due that broadcasters and media take a stand and make a change. I believe that the best way in which to do this is to interact with the viewers. A way to do this is to label shows or rate them accordingly, and to broadcast clips at the beginning and the ending of programs, stating the extent of reality that the show is based on. I don't feel that cutting violence out is the solution, I do, however, feel that the format in which it is depicted should be modified. Just as a movie at the cinema is rated, so should questionable programming. In response to this parents can decide what is in their children's best interest, before viewing it. In the cases where parents are not present during a child's viewing time, a child would be informed that "television violence is not the same as "real-life" violence... [and may] represent a particular view, [but it may not always be a view that a person should base their actions on]"(June 21, 1995, Washington Post).

The efforts of media to change, however, can not be the sole solution to the problem. Parents must also make an effort to teach their children right from wrong and help them to interpret what they see on television in the right context. "The message is, we in the media are not the problem, you the viewer are the problem. If you just change the way you look at television, things will be okay," the co-director of the Washington-based Center for Media Education instructs(June 21, 1995, Washington Post). Although I do not agree that media is not somewhat to blame, I do agree that it is just as much the job of parents as it is of the media to change. If a parent teaches a child morals and values the television is not as influential to the child's mind-frame or decision making process. With this in mind the media needs to assist parents with techniques to follow a new approach to child rearing.

Although there has been a movement which teaches "media literacy" it is not yet a wide spread program. "Just as consumer education seeks to teach people to be discerning in what they buy, media literacy claims to equip viewers with the skills to make informed decisions about what they and their children watch on TV"(June 21, 1995, Washington Post). Some tips which are included in this are: "Set guidelines for selecting programs, make TV watching an interactive, family event, and decide how much TV your family will watch(June 21, 1995, Washington Post). All of these are wonderful ideas, but the program has not you grown to its full potential. More "media literacy" programs should be formed so that a greater population of people can use them to their advantage. With the help of the media the public can then learn to "outsmart [their] TVs."

I am hopeful that my views will be of some help to the FCC. I commend the Commission for its concern surrounding television violence and hope that in the future it will become less of a threat to society.

Sincerely,
Cara LaDouceur
Ithaca College
RM 318, Landon Hall

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953 Danby Road
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Ithaca College
953 Danby Road
Ithaca, N.Y. 14850-7215
October 14, 1995

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY



Secretary, Federal Communications Commission
(MM Docket 93-48) 1919 M Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20554

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in regard to your request for public comments on television violence's effect on children. I believe that there is too much violence on television today: on children and family shows, made-for-TV-movies, cartoons, and the news. Children who view such violence may develop negative behavioral skills.

Television has a definite impact on children's lives. Children exposed to violence on television can receive a fanciful and sometimes distorted view of how to interact with others within a society. When children watch mighty superheroes destroy the enemy with brutal acts of violence and conclude the fight with a sarcastic comment, these children won't receive a valuable lesson of how to handle situations. When a hero completes an act of "justice" onto the "wrongdoer," why is it that the act must always be one of violence.

Children's television programming should be entertaining, however, it should also contain some sort of lesson factor, a value, for children. It is inevitable that children will imitate behaviors that they witness. It is then important that the FCC find a way to help children's programming.

Newton N. Minow, the man who in 1961, coined the phrase "vast wasteland" to describe television, and Craig L. Lamay, want people to remember the words, "public interest." In the June issue of "Time" of this year, Minow stated:

The Federal Communications Act of 1934 gives broadcasters free and exclusive use of broadcast channels on condition that they serve the "public interest, convenience and necessity." Because the act did not define what public interest meant, Congress, the courts and the FCC have spent 60 frustrating years struggling to figure it out ... The public interest meant and still means what we should constantly ask: What can television do for our country, for the common good, for the American people? Our children are the public interest, living and breathing, flesh and blood. (70,72)

"Parents" printed an article in its October 1994 issue about media violence. The writer of the article, Anita Diamant, found some interesting and chilling statistics:

According to the American Psychological Association, if children watch two to four hours of TV a day, they will have witnessed 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other acts of violence by the time they finish elementary school. (40)

Children, exposed to television violence, become fearful of the world, are desensitized to the pain of others, and learn that it is normal for adults to resolve conflicts with violence. (Diamant p.40)

If parents allow their children to watch violence on television, without offering a counter opinion, then a message of approval of such behavior is perceived. (Diamant p. 40-41)

Studies show that during daydreaming, children can reorganize information and rehearse their experiences. Children can explore and practice their future behavioral options when they dream. It has been shown that daydreaming about violence can stimulate aggression. (Klinger and Leyens, "Communication Research," Vol. 22 No. 3, June 1995 p.268)

I am frightened by the fact that the public allows violent programs to be aired for young audiences. It is not necessary to present violent scenes to young children as a form of entertainment. Children's television shows

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should be educational, entertaining or both.

Is there a way to shelter the children of today from violence? This is a catch-22 situation. Children should not be shut out from the world. However, they should not witness violence on the television. By watching violence on television, a child assumes that the violence portrayed is accepted behavior.

The "V-chip" may be a possible means of controlling the amount of violence a child sees on television. However, that government control may very well lead to government censorship.

It would be more beneficial for the children if the public and the government collaborate on responsibilities for monitoring violence shown, to young audiences, on television.

"This is a societal problem that requires a societal resolution," said Anita Diamant.

Violence is all around us. Ask yourself: Is it necessary to glorify violence on the television for all eyes to see, including young ones?

I hope to see an improvement in television programming. If the content of television shows does not improve, the FCC should at least consider reviewing time-slots along with audience comments.

The children are our future. If we do nothing to protect children from viewing unnecessary violence, and it's true that children imitate what they see, then our future may very well become our worst nightmare.

Thank you for asking the public to get involved.

Sincerely,

Leah C. Romano

--Boundary (ID uusCZ4h96NS7gDHc93YgYg)--

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